

The Royal Academy of Music Magazine

No 210 Spring 1976



The Royal Academy of Music Magazine

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Editor Robin Golding

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The Autumn Term witnessed the inception of a new scheme that had been discussed at previous meetings of the Principal's Consultative Committee: that of selecting a 'Composer of the Term' and a particular work by that composer for special study. In the Principal's words, 'The purpose of the scheme is to provide a focus for the Academy's teaching in which all departments can join and thereby produce a sense of integration. Furthermore it is particularly hoped that the scheme may help to show students the relevance of their supporting studies to their main specialism.' The autumn composer was Beethoven, and the work chosen for special study was *Fidelio*, a concert performance of which was given under Maurice Handford in the Duke's Hall on 7 November. Apart from regular lunch-time concerts throughout the term, special emphasis was placed on events in Review Week, which included lectures on the violin Concerto (by Robert Simpson), the piano sonatas (by Denis Matthews), and the songs (by Leslie Orrey). The composer of the Spring Term is Debussy, with special emphasis on the *Nocturnes*, to be included in the Symphony Orchestra concert on 23 March. Another composer to receive concentrated attention is Edgard Varèse (1883-1965), whose complete works were heard in a series of four concerts devised and conducted by John Carewe, on 24 November, 3 December, 26 January and 4 February. These will be the subject of an article that will appear in the Summer issue of the *Magazine*.

Another innovation, of no less importance in its own way, has been the decision to include two members of the Professorial Staff on the Governing Body, after nomination by a ballot conducted by the Teaching Staff Association. Each representative will serve for two years, with a new election each year: the first two members elected to serve from 1 September 1975 were John Davies (who, exceptionally, will retire on 31 July 1976) and Rex Stephens, who will serve until 31 July 1977.



Musical Impressions from a not-so-new World
John Streets

[In the summer of 1975 the Gabrieli Ensemble (Kenneth Sillito, Keith Harvey, Keith Puddy and John Streets, all former students at the RAM) took part in a tour, organised by the British Council, of Latin America—Ed.]

A gun at one's back is perhaps a strange souvenir with which to return from a concert-tour of Latin America, but we live in strange times and itinerant musicians are no longer immune from the vagaries of local revolutionaries or trigger-happy militia. However, three-and-a-half months and over twenty-three thousand miles of continuous travelling also provided happier memories: being serenaded by Mayan Indians in white, half-masted trousers, strumming two guitars and a portable harp under coconut palms on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, or being whirled into an all-embracing samba with several thousand black Brazilians in Bahía were but two of them.

It is the native element rather than the sophisticated veneer of European music which impresses; because while the former may erupt at any time and place, the latter often only exists for the cultured few who can afford the high prices or, for social reasons, wish to be seen at concerts and operas. The further one descends into the southern part of the continent the higher the musical standards become, Chile and Argentina boasting the finer orchestras and more knowledgeable public; but even here we were giving first performances of fairly familiar chamber works by Shostakovich, Messiaen and Stravinsky to large, enthusiastic audiences.

Concert-halls, however, tend to be more exciting in other countries. Nine thousand feet up in Bogotá, Colombia's golden capital, we performed in a magnificent arts-centre, the auditorium of which, in the shape of a shell like Siena's tilted square, had the most perfect acoustic imaginable. In Mexico, also, we played before three spectacular 'back-drops': the incredible 'curtain' of Tiffany glass in Mexico City; one the most voluptuous of Spanish Colonial baroque altars at the festival of Tepotzotlan; and a tropical garden under the volcano of Malcolm Lowry's Quauhnahuac; while Brazilian halls varied from Oscar Niemeyer's extraordinary, claustrophobic pyramid in Brasilia to an incomplete miniature Wembley stadium, where winter winds, howling through empty doorways, scattered music in all directions.

Visits to local musical events were hardly memorable. Buenos Aires's famous Teatro Colón seems to have fallen on hard times (I heard an indifferent *Il Trovatore* and watched a six-hour dress rehearsal of *Andrea Chénier*, in which displays of temperament were more frequent than bars of good singing); Mexico's State Ballet is little more than a dollar-earner from United States visitors, and a violin recital in Oaxaca, one of the most fascinating of Mexican towns, was more interesting for its audience of Zapotec Indians, who sat, tall-hatted, silent and perhaps uncomprehending, through a programme of sonatas by Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms (but as this is the capital of 'magic-mushroom' country, perhaps their thoughts were on altogether higher hallucinogenic levels). A much-publicised evening of annual Zarzuela in Peru,—All the Finest Artists from Madrid!—Full Orchestra and Chorus!!—New Scenery!!!—turned out to be as depressing as the crumbling capital itself, with the Full (Tequila—full?) Orchestra still arriving fifty minutes after the performance began; but I do remember with pleasure a programme of music contemporary with Michelangelo, stylishly

performed in an icy Chilean Church. In Ouro Preto, Brazil's richest mining town (sapphires and imperial topaz, not coal!), a festival of *avant-garde*, held before a curious mixture of miners and hippies in the oldest theatre in America, was a homespun affair: an hour-long pretentious piece of percussive, participation rubbish being as indiscriminately applauded as an amateur pop-group which occupied the second half of the concert.

No; it is the adopted and then transformed, or indigenous folk music which is really alive in Latin America: five little Indians from Guatemala hammering at one mammoth marimba among the witch-doctors' stalls, as casualties from the *mescal* bars tumbled into the gutters; twenty or thirty *mariachi* bands playing in wild, simultaneous cacophony, exceeding any nightmare of Ives; the sleazy sound of the ubiquitous tango, and one mad Argentinian pianist in particular, who pounded out the rhythm with a clenched left fist, searching in vain for melodies with one finger of his right hand; solitary mountain goatherds blowing reed pipes, two miles high in the sky; the beat of voodoo drums, as candles and flowers were floated into waterfalls in a tropical forest only three miles from the centre of Rio de Janeiro; the one-string whine of the *berimbau* accompanying the balletic kick-fighting of Salvador; but above all, that unforgettable samba which unleashes every inhibition and every sinew of the human body and sets blood, sweat and tears flowing in every street and square of Brazil.

[On Sunday 4 January a Memorial Concert in honour of Max Pirani, who died on 5 August 1975, was given in the Wigmore Hall. The programme included Bach's *Italian Concerto* (Priscilla Naish), Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -Leben* (Felicity Lott and Charles Spencer), Rachmaninov's Sonata for cello and piano (Raphael Wallfisch and Richard Markham), and Debussy's string Quartet (the Aeolian String Quartet—Emanuel Hurwitz, Raymond Keenlyside, Margaret Major and Derek Simpson); and one objective of the concert was the establishment at the RAM of a Max Pirani Memorial Prize for Piano Trio (donations should be sent to Mrs Derek Simpson, 26 Pensford Avenue, Kew Gardens, Richmond, Surrey). Before the music began, Sir Thomas Armstrong gave the following address—Ed.]

'As I came into the Wigmore Hall tonight, I couldn't help thinking that this was an occasion when we might properly borrow the most famous of all memorial inscriptions. 'Si monumentum requiris, circumspice' is the epitaph of Wren in St Paul's Cathedral—'If you ask where is his monument, look around you': and as I look around me here I see many friends who would gladly admit that much of what they are and can do is owed to Max Pirani. This in itself is a lasting memorial, for nobody can estimate the range or durability of an influence that passes from master to pupil and thence into the great stream of musical endeavour. Often enough, as an old musician watches the work of a young one, he can discern the finger-prints of a teacher, perhaps long dead and forgotten: where did that teacher, he asks himself, learn the skill that he handed down to his pupil and his pupil's pupils? Did he have any idea about its origin, or hopes of its ultimate destination?

The teacher's task, I suppose, is to lay before the pupil, after selection and analysis, the fruits of his own experience rather than what he has learned from others. The pupil can then take for

himself, as Beethoven said, all that he is capable of taking, or what is necessary to his own development: and the experience that gave character to Max Pirani's lessons was a wide and varied one. As a solo pianist, and in ensemble work with Leila Doubleday and Charles Hambourg, he had won acclaim in most parts of the world. He had enjoyed contact with many of the finest artists of the day, and during his association with Emanuel Móor had known European pre-war culture at its best, through the men and women who passed through the house at Mont Pèlerin. And all this experience was subjected to an acute and critical examination, for Max was one of those musicians who bring to the art not only natural talent, but also a fine intelligence that could have been employed in various fields of activity. He was an accomplished writer: he could have been a doctor, an architect, an art-historian, or a diplomatic envoy like that Master of the King's Musick Nicholas Lanier, who was sent by Charles I on secret missions to purchase in Europe the paintings that formed and still form the nucleus of the Royal Collections.

'You have in your programmes an account of Max's career which shows how various his contacts were, and how many influences converged upon his development as an artist and a character. After the years of apprenticeship and early success there followed war service in France. I have recently read in *The Times* that three years in the army is equivalent to three years at a University: I can assure you from experience that three days on the Somme could be equivalent to a lifetime of learning about life from books. By the time I came to know Max well his playing days were largely over, though I shall always remember an elegant performance of Fauré's A major Sonata which he gave with Leila Doubleday, I think in Oxford. His long experience has now been filtered through a fine mesh of critical appraisal, leaving an outlook that was cool, impartial, ironic, but never ungenerous. Interested as ever in comparing the insights expressed in music with those of painting and other arts, he liked to relate his own conclusions about people and life to those of observers like Dickens and Turgenev, Proust and Thomas Mann; and if you spent a day with him at a festival or conference you would be sure to find that he had in his pocket some book that was exciting his interest and perhaps modifying his judgements. Latterly he seemed to be trying to derive a few general principles from the evidence he had collected, to become more interested in abstract ideas and speculations suggested by a close study of T S Eliot.

'These developments were bound to affect his style as a teacher and his views about performance, and he latterly became highly critical of some tendencies in present-day pianism that seemed coarse and insensitive. For himself he retained the balance between feeling and his own kind of rather sceptical thought that for nearly fifty years had given character to his work in the Royal Academy of Music, where his influence was different from that of other great teachers like Harold Craxton, York Bowen and Harry Isaacs, but in no way less powerful. Indeed it may be said that the impact of a man whose experience and outlook were international, and at all times in touch with contemporary ideas in other arts and other countries, could be specially valuable in any of those institutions that are everywhere liable to become parochial and self-satisfied.

'What will be our thoughts about Max as we listen to music played in his honour by those whom he has taught? For myself I shall remember an artist whose integrity was unquestioned and

whose judgement was respected. Never pompous, never pretentious, always well informed, he gave his opinion, if you asked for it, in terms both clear and precise, often with humour. When he undertook to do something it was done well and done punctually. If he had criticism to offer this was made in a friendly way, but not soft-pedalled: his approval of anything one did was welcome and encouraging. There are, as we all know, people who by their mere presence make you feel better, just as there are those whose very approach brings with it a mist of gloom and foreboding. Max was one of the former, and high up in the class. When you were with him you seemed to be at your best: when he left you, you felt the desire to remain at the level which for a time, under his influence, you had reached.'

John Alden Carpenter, 1876-1951
A neglected American composer and a pupil of Elgar

Frederic Vanson



That Elgar had any American pupils came, I must admit, as a surprise to me. But he had at any rate one, the now-neglected but still notable composer from Illinois John Alden Carpenter. During one of Elgar's sojourns in Italy (recalled so memorably in his overture *Alassio*) he gave some lessons in compositions to the thirty-year-old Carpenter, a business man who longed to be a major composer.

Carpenter was born 100 years ago, on 28 February 1876, at Park Ridge, Illinois. His father owned a substantial business dealing with railroad, shipping and other supplies and John Alden Carpenter was later to become vice-president of the company, his association with it being in fact life-long. He had music lessons first from local teachers before going to the Chicago musician W L Seebreck and from him to Harvard, where his music tutor was John Knowles Paine, a very influential and prolific composer who had studied in Berlin. At Harvard Carpenter graduated AB before proceeding to a business career. It was during a visit to Rome in 1906 that he met Elgar, and he studied further in America under Berhard Ziehn in Chicago.

His first compositions of any merit were his *Improving Songs for Anxious Children* of 1907 (humour was always to be a characteristic of this composer). A violin and piano Sonata was published in 1912 but he returned to vocal composition with *Gitanjali*, a song cycle to words by Tagore in 1914. He had great sympathy with the spirit of Tagore's work. Perhaps his most famous work followed in 1915. This was his orchestral suite *Adventures in a Perambulator* performed first by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. It had a successful London performance in 1921 and is one of the very few of Carpenter's works still to be heard. It has been broadcast a number of times in this country. This suite is characteristically witty and skilful in its handling of orchestral forces, and deserves a wider public. To this period also belongs his witty early Concertino for piano and orchestra.

Carpenter's first Symphony bore the title *Sermons in Stones*. It was written in 1916-17 and first performed at Norfolk, Connecticut in 1917. There followed a ballet, *The Birthday of the Infanta*, after Oscar Wilde's story. This was staged at the Chicago Opera in 1919 and again in 1921. He made an orchestral suite from it in 1930. As is not surprising in this age of jazz, Carpenter was somewhat influenced by that very American idiom. But he used jazz—it did not use him. Its influence is traceable in the ballet *Krazy Kat* produced in Chicago in 1921, and in his next ballet *Skyscrapers* which was put on by the Metropolitan Opera, New York in 1926 when the composer was fifty. *Skyscrapers* was

easily his most modernistic work, impressionistic in its use of cacophony and dissonance to suggest the mad world of the American urban scene. This very successful ballet was later put on in Munich, during pre-Hitler days of course, for the Führer abhorred dissonance! It remained as a suite in the repertory of the great Serge Koussevitsky.

Carpenter's second Symphony (untitled) was written in 1931 and his violin Concerto in 1937. So far no mention has been made of his chamber music, which included a string Quartet (1928) and a piano Quintet (1934) as well as the earlier violin Sonata. One of his most-praised scores was *Water Colours* (1918), a setting of four Chinese poems which showed great delicacy and sympathy with the oriental. Carpenter's last work was a symphonic suite *The Seven Ages* written in the 1940s and first given at a New York Philharmonic concert in 1945.

Of all this considerable output of music there is not a single current recording this side of the Atlantic. A few years ago it was possible to get, on the Mercury label, a record of *Adventures in a Perambulator*, but this seems to have been deleted long since. There is therefore a gap in the catalogue which some enterprising company might like to fill! The characteristics of Carpenter's music were wit, elegance, humour and fantasy. He was an experimentalist but never a wild man of music. A master of orchestration, he also had a distinct melodic gift and sensitivity to words when writing songs. He does not deserve the swift oblivion which has, let us hope, only temporarily, fallen upon him. He died in Chicago on 26 April 1951, in his seventy-sixth year.



Profile No 12
Mary Jarred,
Hon RAM
James Gaddarn

Mary Jarred was born in the North Riding of Yorkshire and made her first public appearance at the age of three! Even in childhood she possessed the basic requisites of a singer—natural resonance and projection as well as a love of words.

In discussing the career of this celebrated singer, who retired from the RAM last July, it is impossible to avoid mentioning the

great international artists of the pre-war and post-war periods because Mary worked with the world's greatest artists. Like many distinguished performers Mary won prizes at northern music festivals before treading the path of the professional singer. On the advice of Percy Scholes she studied with the great singing teacher Victor Beigel, who had been the mentor of Gervase Elwes and Melchior and other celebrated singers. Beigel quickly realised that she possessed a rare talent. He, it was, who gave her the technical equipment to serve her art and the knowledge to appreciate German literature.

Having made a successful début in London she became known in the provinces and was a frequent broadcaster from Savoy Hill and Newcastle. She auditioned for the Hamburg Opera and joined the small number of English singers who were resident members of foreign opera houses. During her first year at Hamburg she performed the *Ring Cycle*, singing the rôles of First Norn, Erda and Fricka to Bockelmann's Wotan. Among her colleagues were Melchior, Jansen and Kipnis. In addition to Wagnerian rôles she performed *Orpheus* and many of the Mozart, Verdi and Strauss operas. The training Mary received in Hamburg influenced her greatly and she owes much of her success to these formative years in Germany. She remained in Hamburg for three years and received invitations to be a guest artist at other German opera houses but decided, because of the rise of the Nazis, to return home.

On returning to England Mary took part in the International Seasons at Covent Garden. She sang in the *Ring Cycle* under Bruno Walter, performing the rôles of Erda and Fricka. Her distinguished fellow artists were Frieda Leider, Lotte Lehmann, Melchior and Friedrich Schorr. She also sang Mary in Flagstad's London début in *The Flying Dutchman* and performances of *Schwanda the Bagpiper* under Beecham with Kipnis as the Magician, and *Orpheus* for Lilian Baylis at Sadler's Wells. Mary's concert engagements were many, and she was to be seen constantly on the platforms of every established society in the country. Her repertoire was vast, ranging from Monteverdi to Stravinsky; she was a pioneer of Mahler's music in this country. Music-lovers recall, with affection, her singing of Elgar, Handel, Vaughan Williams and her performances of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* on Passion Sunday at the Royal Albert Hall with the Bach Choir under Reginald Jacques. Connoisseurs speak enthusiastically of her recitals with Elisabeth Schumann, Szigeti, Eisenberg and with George Reeves, her very fine accompanist. Mary was a soloist at the Silver Jubilee Concert of King George V and Queen Mary. She was also one of the sixteen marvellous singers at Sir Henry Wood's Jubilee for whom Vaughan Williams wrote the *Serenade to Music*. Conductors with whom she worked at this period were Toscanini, Furtwängler, Boult, Wood, Harty, Sargent, Coates and Walford Davies.

During the war years Mary travelled the length and breadth of the country many times, singing at CEMA and ENSA concerts as well as fulfilling her normal engagements with choral societies and orchestras. Myra Hess invited her to sing at the National Gallery concerts, a wonderful series which did much to alleviate the trials and tribulations of war-scarred London. The post-war years saw her busier than ever, with broadcasts and performances throughout the country. She recalls with joy, working again with Furtwängler in the Beethoven 'Ninth' and Brahms's Alto Rhapsody with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra; Mahler's *Das Lied von*

As Fricka in Hamburg



der Erde with George Szell; Frank Martin's *Golgotha* with Ansermet; Bach cantatas with Enesco and Fritz Busch—recording Cantata No 53 ('Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde') with Karl Rankl; the first performance of Berg's *Wozzeck* in concert under Boult at the Royal Albert Hall; Vaughan Williams's *Riders to the Sea*, in which she portrayed Maurya, and Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at Glyndebourne and Edinburgh, produced by Carl Ebert and conducted by Wallenstein, in which she sang the part of Mother Goose.

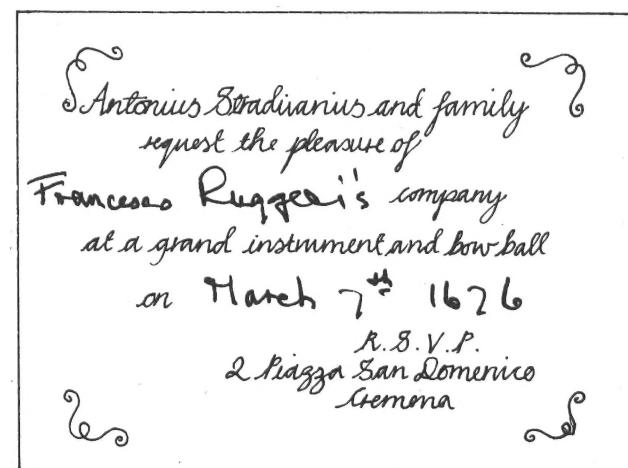
During the 1960s Sir Thomas Armstrong invited Mary to become a member of the Singing Faculty of the Academy. Her work with the students and the friendship which has been given to her by the Principal, Professors and Administrative Staff have given her great satisfaction and happiness. On retirement people are expected to lead a life of ease but, I am sure, and I have had the privilege of knowing her for many years, Mary will continue to serve music as she has done so admirably for some fifty years. Hers has been a wonderful career in which she has enriched the lives of very many people. Musicians and music-lovers throughout the country will wish Mary to continue to enrich our lives for many years to come.

The Cremona Affair Vivian Joseph



The Stradivari workshop was humming with excitement, because at last the great day had arrived, the day of the party. Old violins were talking to violas they had not spoken to for years, and the half-size cellos and violins were getting in everybody's way. It had not been easy—months of preparation had gone into the final arrangements—and now the instruments thought the apprentices would never go, but at last the workshop was clear.

It had all started by one of the cellos saying 'Being in this workshop is like living in a hospital. We see nothing but broken necks, cracked ribs and damaged heads, and it is all very well that our dear Master always manages to cure everybody, but do we hear them when they are better? Oh no, they always go into the house to be played. Well, I have an idea. Why don't we give a party and invite all the instruments and bows that have been here, and the ones we have never met?' Everyone thought it was a marvellous idea, and soon they were all crowding round the table making suggestions. First, the invitation:



Some instruments who had been left in Stradivari's workshop for repairs were asked on the spot and invitations had been smuggled into violin, viola, and cello cases that were being returned to their owners with instructions to give them to the instruments invited. It had not been easy choosing the guests. Of course they had to ask the Bergonzis, who lived next door, and the Guarneris two doors away, and the Ruggeris down the street. Then there were the Amatis from over the road by the church. 'I suppose we have to ask both brothers, Antonius and Hieronymus, and the old man, Andreas?'

One of the cellos said: 'There was a cello in the other day from Mantua, and he looked so pale I told him he could do with some of our Cremona sun. He said his name was Grancino; could I ask him?' 'Yes, of course, and we must ask the Montagnanas from Venice, and they can bring the Gofrillers with them. Two brothers came in the other day. They always go about together. I think their names were Lorenzo and Tommaso Carcassi, from Florence; we must ask them. Do you remember the Guadagninis from here? They left and went to Milan, and then to Parma, and after that to Piacenza, but where are they now? Where shall we send the invitation?' 'There's a large violin family called Gagliano in Naples, with lots of youngsters', said a violin. 'One of them was here and I was admiring his back, and he told me that King George III of England had ordered a quartet with his coat of arms to be painted on the back of each instrument. This violin said it made him feel so grand. We must ask them.' They agreed that if they asked Stainer from Germany, and Klotz from Mittenwald, that would be enough.

'Now what about bows? We cannot play without them, and they make such pleasant companions, they are so tall and slender. The Master says the bows we should get to know are the Tourtes of Paris. He says we make a perfect pair, so let's have all the Tourtes, and the one with the grand-sounding name, Xavier.' A viola who had been to Paris and was now back for a repair said: 'I know the Tourtes are great friends of the Vignerons, the Voirins and the Peccates in Paris, so I suppose we should ask them too.' 'Ah! the bows of Paris, doesn't that sound romantic? We must have them all.' A violin, one of a quartet of Stradivari instruments destined for the Russian Court, said 'I know who I would like to invite: his name is Kittel, and he comes from St Petersburg. It would be nice to meet him here before we play together in Russia.' One of the older Strads who had been writing all the invitations said: 'Well, that seems to be the lot—but wait a moment, I was quite forgetting our English friends, the ones with the funny names, Dodd, Tubbs and Hill from London, we must ask them, and now certainly we have enough bows to go round.'

A rumble was heard in the corner, where a very old double bass was trying desperately to turn round. He had been there for so long nobody ever spoke to him, and in fact they had all forgotten his existence. 'Have you quite finished making up your list of your grand friends? Are you sure it's complete, sure you haven't left anybody out?' The room was silent as the old bass went on. 'High and mighty aren't you, all of you? Not a thought for your poor relations down the street. Yes, you know who I mean, the Viols. They are your forefathers, and now they are not good enough to be invited.' 'But we haven't seen them for years', said a young cello. 'That's no excuse', said the bass. 'They all live together in that big house at the end of the Piazza. They never go out now because nobody ever bothers to invite them, but there is no reason why we shouldn't.' Of course they all agreed that they should be

invited, and an invitation was sent to the Viola da Gambas, their cousins the Viola da Braccias, and the old grandmother, the Viola da Spalla, and now everybody was happy.

But the time had come for work. All the wood-shavings were swept up from the floor, the necks, bellies, backs, and ribs were stored out of sight. The scrapers, the iron cramps, and the bending irons were put away. The oval planes, the 'f' hole piercers, and the gauge callipers were put back on the shelf. The purfling gauges, compasses, lining clips, moulds, blocks and linings were neatly stacked away, and now all was tidy. The benches were put along the walls, and a table placed in each corner, and the remaining tables, with candles burning on them, were put at strategic places, lighting up the scene as if it were a ballroom.

Then the guests began to arrive. The older Stradivari instruments stood at the door to greet them. 'Good evening, Montagnana, glad to see you up and about again. I hear you had a nasty sound-post crack, and were on your back for months. How are you Carcassi, and your brother? What—you've opened a bass-bar in Florence? On the bridge? I hope you make lots of notes.' Miss Stradivari stepped forward to greet Miss Voirin and Madame Peccate. 'I am sure that after your long journey you would like to come upstairs and straighten your hair, and put on some resin?' Two violins passed them on the stairs, and one was overheard to say to the other: 'Do unscrew me a little, my dear, my adjusters are killing me.' 'Good to see you, Klotz. I am told you have been in Mittenwald nearly as long as we have been here.'

Everybody had now arrived, and the Stradivaris mixed with their guests. The older instruments were sitting at the tables watching the youngsters enjoy themselves. They were eating sandwiches of peg-paste and powdered resin, and there was a jug of varnish on each table, from which they were helping themselves liberally. In one corner of the room was the buffet. Beside a pile of tuning forks were spare-ribs, tail-piece and gut-string pie with courantes, wood-shavings sprinkled with crotchetts and quavers, minims on the stave, and for the sweet, elegant dishes of glue, topped with sawdust and chopped purfling. In the other corner of the room was the bar, with varnish for the young and spirit varnish for the older ones.

The conversation was getting rather personal after a few glasses, so let us eavesdrop a little.

'My dear, just look at the youngest of the Gagliano girls, she's only got a G string on, the brazen hussy.'

'Just like a Maggini to have double purfling.'

'Hasn't she a pretty scroll? They make a nice couple, don't they? I hear they have bought a double case.'

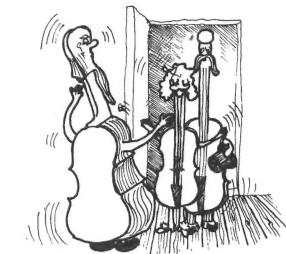
'They say his fingerboard has quite worn out.'

'One of my ancestors is in a glass case in Genoa.' 'Really? I am afraid most of my family perished in the French Revolution. The mob burst into the Palace and massacred them all. Twenty-four of them there were. The king used to have them play at his meals. I believe one escaped to England.'

'Did you see that? A Klotz went up to one of the Ruggeri girls and asked her to dance, and she said: "The Ruggeris don't dance with Klotz".'

'Doesn't Grandma Tourte's white hair suit her? Although I am told that it keeps falling out. Of course she is not wearing a slide. I do think our mother-of-pearl slides make all the difference.'

'Ah, there's the English Miss Hill. She looks half French with those two gold fleur-de-lis in her nut. Shh! I do believe she is



going to say something.'

'Violini, Viole e Violoncelli. My dear instruments, and of course, my dear bows, I know you are all strung up on this happy occasion, but I am sure you will be in tune with me, when I tell you that, though your fame, dear Stradivaris, has spread all over the world, you have remained the same shining examples of your master's art' ('only because of their varnish', said a Grancino, *sotto voce*). 'England is a long way from Cremona, but one of our famous poets, his name is Longfellow ('Sounds like a Tromba Marina' said a viola to his companion) has written a poem, immortalising you forever in his descriptive words. If I may, I should like to recite a part of it.' There was polite applause at this, and Miss Hill began:

The instrument on which he played
Was in Cremona's workshops made,
By a great master of the past,
Ere yet was lost the art divine:
Fashioned of maple and of pine,
That in Tyrolean forests vast
Had rocked and wrestled with the blast;
Exquisite was it in design,
A marvel of the lutist's art,
Perfect in each minutest part;
And in its hollow chamber, thus,
The maker from whose hands it came
Had written his unrivalled name—
'Antonius Stradivarius'.

As Miss Hill's voice died away, the cheering and clapping was tremendous, mainly on the part of the Strads. 'I didn't know we were quite so famous, did you?' 'Not really.' 'I don't see the Bergonzis clapping very much, nor the Gofrillers. Ah well.'

'Oh look who has just come in, Count Stradivari. They say there are emissaries from all over the world waiting to adopt any member of their family. Good evening, Count.' 'What a beautiful varnish he has on.' 'Just look at the cut of his "f" holes.' 'He has a scroll just like his father.' 'I believe one of the sayings going round the town now is "as rich as Stradivarius".' 'There are the Amati brothers, Antonius and Hieronymus. They are twins, you know; rather small, but beautifully made. What is Antonio saying? Shh! He is calling for silence.'

'Fellow instruments and bows, our youngest Strad would like to recite a poem. Go on, Omobono. Quiet, everybody.'

In former days we had the Viol, in,
Ere the true instrument had come about,
But now we say since this all ears doth win,
The Violin, hath put the Viol out.

The violins and cellos cheered madly, but it soon became quiet as all eyes were turned in the direction of the Viols. The older ones got up, walked over to the bar, and started drinking varnish, in doubles. 'I do think that was a bit cruel', said one old Strad to another. 'Well, let's face it, if they don't retire gracefully, they will have to be put in a museum. Of course we will go and see them occasionally and take them some cakes of resin, but that's life: as soon as a better instrument is made, the old one is soon discarded. Aren't we lucky we are Strads? No instrument in the world is better than us. Yes, I know that if it had not been for Tarisio we might have lain for another hundred years. I suppose you are

right.'

'There's Antonio walking over to the Viols. Do please play us something, we haven't heard you for years.' The Viols looked at each other. 'It might be the last time. Oh come on, let's have a consort.' Six of the Viols, two bass, two tenor, and two treble, walked over to the end of the room, and sat down in a circle. The room was silent as they started to play a six-part Fantasia by Orlando Gibbons. The silence was breathless as the beautiful, soft, ethereal sounds of the Viols were heard, and when they had finished tumultuous applause broke out. Some of the older violins were in tears. 'So beautiful!' 'Such delicate quality!'

One of the old bass Viols went up to Antonio and said, 'Thank you for asking us to play. It will probably be the last time, but don't forget that we reigned supreme in our day, and well do I remember the poem I used to recite as a lad:

Of all the instruments that are,
None with the Viol can compare;
Mark how the strings their order keep,
With a whet, whet, whet and a sweep, sweep, sweep.
But above all this still abounds
With a zingle, zingle, zing, and a zit, zan, zounds.'

'Never fear, old bass', said Antonio. 'I predict that you will never be forgotten, and even in the twentieth century there will still be consorts of Viols played. Something that was so beautiful must never be allowed to die.'

'There's old man Tubbs with his family, they are so dark.' 'But don't you know, my dear? Every time they need a hair, he varnishes them.'

'I see the Voirins have brought an old bow to look after the little ones. What is she saying? "If you don't behave yourselves, I will give you to old Tarisio, and you know where you will end up, in France, or England." Doesn't she go on?'

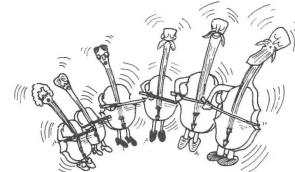
'There is one of the Dodds getting up. What did he say? A poem? Not another one in praise of the Strads, surely.' 'We have a violin maker in London called Young', said Dodd. 'He has a son who plays the fiddle, and a London wit has written a catch upon Young and his son. Here it is.'

You scrapers that want a good fiddle well strung,
You must go to the man that is old while he's Young;
But if this same fiddle you fain would play bold,
You must go to his son, who'll be Young when he's old.
There's old Young and young Young, both men of renown,
Old sells, and Young plays, the best fiddles in town;
Young and old live together, and may they live long,
Young, to play an old fiddle; old, to sell a new song.'

'I suppose we must be polite and clap. Oh no! Now all the little ones are clamouring to recite.' 'Can I say one?' 'I want to say one, oh please!' (this was a little Amati, almost in tears). 'Go on then.'

There was a young lady of Rio,
Who played in a Mendelssohn trio;
Her technique was scanty,
So she played it Andante,
Instead of Allegro con brio.

He said it all in one breath, and it caused much amusement. But now it was time to go home. Instruments began looking for their cases and the bows that they came with, until gradually the



workshop was empty, save for the Strads. They all helped put back everything as it was, spreading all the wood-shavings around the benches, and bringing out all the tools again. As the last candle was snuffed out, sounds of the apprentices arriving could be heard, and Stradivari's workshop once again assumed its normal air of peaceful business.

'I was just thinking', said one Strad to another. 'What?' asked his friend.

Why piccolo profession
Like music
That's full of Viol practices
Confirmed Lyres
Old fiddles
And bass desires?
For the Lute, of course.

Leonard Brain, who died in November 1975, was appointed a professor in the Royal Academy of Music in 1963, but had been associated with it since childhood. The elder son of England's finest horn player, Aubrey Brain, he was born in 1915 with the sounds of distinguished playing in his ears and with a mother, Marion Beeley, who has been a Wagnerian contralto at Covent Garden. His father always played in the best orchestras, so as a child he was present at concerts in the Queen's Hall as a matter of course, and therefore learned the symphonic repertoire in the most natural way; at St Paul's School his work was directed towards a career in science, although he was by then studying the oboe.

His acute and analytical brain insisted that he worked hard at school, so he proceeded to The Royal College of Science and graduated with a BSc degree in Chemistry only to realise that he would never be happy in anything but music: thus he arrived at the RAM as a student at the age of twenty-four and became the annoying, kind and intelligent character I first met when I was seventeen. I had arrived as a student from Somerset to find that within two days I had discovered two friends who were to be almost closer to me than my own brothers; the delightful and brilliant Brains, Leonard and Dennis (who was just younger than I was), had made themselves known in their several ways. Leonard introduced himself by demanding my name, whence I came and my purpose, in such terrifying tones that in my innocence I was convinced that he was quite the most senior of professors, until I found that I was sitting next to him in the students' orchestra the next day; Dennis by admitting at my behest that he indeed played the horn and was his father's son.

No brothers could have loved each other more than they did, or could have been more different. Both were completely modest: Dennis seemed to revel in his extraordinary facility for horn playing and his elder brother, no virtuoso himself, delighted in it too, as he worked at his new profession under his hero Alec Whittaker, whose playing he always admired so much.

No brilliant technique had Leonard, but he possessed something far more rare and valuable; something which I venture to suggest was less known even to that sweetly musical artist, his brother. Leonard Brain's touching quality was to be heard in every melody that found its way to him. So it was that the *cor anglais* became his natural voice and he its finest English exponent.

When war came many young musicians joined the RAF Central

Band and Orchestra at Uxbridge, and there Leonard told us all what to do, without having any authority to do so, and behaved faultlessly until hostilities ended, when he was invited by Sir Thomas Beecham to become the *cor anglais* player of his newly formed Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He remained there until ill-health forced him to retire from playing, but during those many years on concert platforms he had been a member, as I was, of the Dennis Brain Wind Quintet and was much in demand as one of the few players of the bass oboe.

His great intelligence, honesty and humility made him a teacher who was much loved, and we who knew him well will miss that fearless and splendid looking person who became the frail man today's students remember.

The death of Muriel Holland in October 1975 brought to an end a lifetime of piano teaching in Wimbledon. 'Holly', as she was affectionately known to all her former pupils and colleagues, studied at the RAM from 1919 to 1924 with Ambrose Coviello, and here, thanks to the inspiration of his teaching, she became deeply interested in working with young people. At his invitation, she taught piano at his music school in Harrow, and also began the private teaching practice in Wimbledon which has earned her such a distinguished reputation and widespread success for the past fifty years.

Holly strove always to bring out the best in all her pupils, whatever their ability, and she had a particular gift for winning the respect and trust of even the youngest pupil. With almost unfailing patience, a wonderful sense of humour and unflagging enthusiasm she was able to bring the music alive. To one and all, in that unmistakable handwriting, came a stream of witty rhymes and messages, and her generosity extended far beyond the music room. Her aims were thoroughly professional and public performance was encouraged in all. Over the years her pupils scored record successes in examinations and music festivals, and some of her most talented children also took part in Radio and Television broadcasts, Wigmore Hall concerts and in the famous annual Students' Recitals which she loved to organise herself. As a result of her all-round musical training and influence, an amazing number of her ex-students have made successful careers both as performers and teachers, in all branches of the musical profession.

Holly was never idle, and she spent much of her 'spare' time researching into new music. Ever anxious to further the cause of private teaching, she served on many committees, including the ISM and MTA. In latter years, her patience and determination found a new test in the courage and bravery with which she uncomplainingly fought her long illness, continuing her teaching right to the end. She has left us the richer by the inspiration she gave to so many, through the language of music, and we remember her with love and gratitude.

Muriel Holland

1901-75

Judith Burton



Reviews of New Books and Music

Gordon Green

Joan Last: *Interpretation in Piano Study* (OUP, £1.60)

In this admirable little book, intended for the intermediate pupil and the teacher of the intermediate pupil, Miss Last discusses, simply and lucidly, problems of notation and style.

Often such books are over-simplified—each type of problem placed in a water-tight box and tied up only too neatly. One remembers, for instance, the instruction books of one's childhood:

Obituary Leonard Brain 1915-75

Gareth Morris



'A crotchet with a staccato dot is held for the duration of a quaver; a crotchet with a staccato dash is held for the duration of a semiquaver'. All seemed so clear and tidy until one gradually realised, over the months and years, that, although one knew the rules oneself, apparently Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin didn't, and that these rules had to be bent and sometimes broken if one's playing was to be imbued with character and imagination. (Young Pupil: 'Who wrote those rests?'. Teacher: 'The composer, of course'. YP: 'And whose is that pedal marking?'. T: 'The composer's'. YP: 'But how can I observe the rests if the pedal ...?' One need not complete the sentence.)

It is to Miss Last's everlasting credit that, in writing so neat and succinct a book, she nevertheless reminds the reader again and again that the rules must be freely and imaginatively interpreted if one is to play with true, musicianly understanding.

But a reviewer must be allowed to cavil, and I would say that, while, in the section devoted to pedalling, the advice given in the text is usually precise, the notated pedalling given in the music examples is often less so. For instance, in examples 164 and 166 the delayed pedalling necessary for a clean legato is clearly notated—but similar delayed pedalling is equally necessary in the second bar of example 167 (and in many other examples) where the given pedalling is, at least, equivocal; and in example 170 the notated pedalling appears to belie the wise advice given immediately above it.

These would seem to be faults of production rather than of principle and certainly Miss Last's vast experience has enabled her to produce a book of which the virtues are many and varied, and one which deserves to be widely read by those to whom it is addressed.

Studies in Eastern Chant (General Editors: Egon Wellesz and Milos Velimirović) Vol III, edited by Milos Velimirović (OUP, £6.00)

Begun on the initiative of Egon Wellesz in 1965, the series *Studies in Eastern Chant* has so far averaged one volume every three years. Yet the style and quality of production put it almost in a class by itself among periodicals; the provision of hard covers, with attractive and robust dust covers, the inclusion of photograph illustrations of manuscripts and of a general index all tend to give each volume the character of a separate book. No less impressive too, is the complexity of type setting, involving both western and Byzantine musical notation, as well as Greek, Roman, and occasionally Old Slavonic type; all of which no doubt goes a long way towards explaining the outrageous price.

In this way, the series is fully comparable in sumptuousness with the subsidiary series of the *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae*, an older series also started by Wellesz in the 1930s. The contents of this volume, however, are quite different, and indicate that, despite appearances, *Studies in Eastern Chant* is very much a periodical.

For, with the exception of the first article, the volume consists of a series of short and often insubstantial contributions on a wide variety of subjects. Some of these give the impression of having been included to fill up space; two contributions—by Grigore Pantiru and Christos Patrinelis—are reissues (in French and English) of earlier articles published respectively in Rumania and Greece. That by Pantiru, on Ecphonetic notation, is provided with a concluding editorial note by Egon Wellesz refuting virtually the entire contents of the article.

Four of these short articles however are valuable for one reason or another. That by Jørgen Raasted ('Voice and Verse in a Troparion of Cassia') shows that musical punctuation can sometimes be a guide to grammatical sense where the meaning of a text is obscure. One doubts whether Byzantine scholars will, as a result of this article concern themselves with the musical settings of the hymns that interest them.

Similar in scope is an article in French by Dom Michel Huglo on the use of Byzantine intonation formulae in early western tonaries, though again this is the subject of a book by Huglo, published in 1971.

Perhaps the most valuable are those by Helen Breslitch-Erickson on the Communion Chants of the Presanctified Liturgy and by Maureen Morgan on the Polyeleos. Neither article concerns manuscript traditions earlier than the fourteenth century, and in the case of the Communion Chants this earlier tradition is of great interest. Nevertheless, the fourteenth century, especially in Athos and Thessalonica, has recently attracted a lot of attention for two reasons. Firstly the period and place are associated with far-reaching changes in the musical repertoire, which eventually obliterated all memory of earlier traditions; and secondly, there is a highly articulate witness of these changes in a certain Symeon of Thessalonica, whose writings fill one of the largest volumes of the *Patrologia Graeca*.

Neither article attempts to reveal anything about these changes within the very limited subjects with which they are concerned, but both are useful, if somewhat incomplete, contributions.

The first article in the volume by Dalia Cohen on 'Theory and Practice in Liturgical Music of the Christian Arabs in Israel' occupies nearly a third of the volume. Miss Cohen has collected a representative selection of hymns commonly sung in the Orthodox Church in Israel, performed by a variety of individuals with different musical backgrounds. She has then undertaken a theoretical analysis of this material on tape.

Her analysis is confused in both its purpose and its execution; in its purpose because it seems to have been undertaken almost entirely from the standpoint of Arabic musical theory—a somewhat cock-eyed approach to music which, for all the undeniable Arabic influence on it, is in origin Greek. Its confusion of execution follows from this. The modal framework of the music (for which Miss Cohen uses the Arabic term *lahan*, pl. *alhan*) is never adequately described, and even the account of Arabic *maqamat* is muddled and incomplete. The comparisons that are made between *maqam* scale-forms and *lahan* scale-forms are unmethodical and, incredibly, are none of them illustrated with musical examples.

Above all, the amount of musical examples for an article of this scope and complexity is minuscule. Instead there is a preoccupation with presenting different scale-forms in a pseudo-scientific fashion, in which the successive intervals are presented in terms of fractions of an equal-tempered tone. The absurdity of this approach can be demonstrated by the following table, which appears on p 29 and purports to give the scale structure of the *maqam* 'Siga'. The letters presumably indicate notes, the figures representing average ranges of interval between them expressed in tenths of a tone (my italics):

E	F	-G	A	B
5-8	8-12	3-7	8-16	

By adding the maximum and minimum figures separately, we could conclude that the interval E to B has an average range of variation of rather less than a perfect fourth to nearly a major sixth. In fact, we can infer, from a study of subsequent tables, that this piece of mathematical and musical nonsense is the result of putting three different scale-forms together.

Miss Cohen's field of activity is undoubtedly of more than passing interest. One hopes that, when she has finished writing pretentious and jargon-filled tracts of this kind, she will publish her tapes so that others can get on with interpreting them.

Robin Golding



William Crotch: a self-portrait drawn in 1801

Jonathan Rennert: *William Crotch (1775-1847), Composer, Artist, Teacher* (Terence Dalton, Lavenham, Suffolk, £3.20)

Music is not short of prodigies—think of Purcell, Mozart, Schubert and Mendelssohn—but few could equal the astonishing feats of the young William Crotch. Unfortunately, although he enjoyed much longer life than they did (he was seventy-two when he died, whereas none of them reached forty) his creative gift never matured in proportion to its youthful promise—perhaps because of both the unsympathetic musical climate in early nineteenth-century England, and the extraordinary diversity of his other interests, which included painting, architecture, astronomy, bell-ringing and fireworks.

Jonathan Rennert's brief (100-page) bicentenary tribute gives an account of Crotch's life and examines the more interesting of his compositions in some detail, suggesting that some, at least, of the music of this minor but attractive figure would repay investigation and occasional performance today. Mr Rennert's lively and chatty narrative begins with Crotch's early years as a travelling prodigy. He played the organ when he was two, and was regularly on tour between the ages of three and nine; and in later years he wrote: 'I look back on this part of my life with pain and humiliation ... the manner in which my uncultivated abilities had been displayed to audiences who were frequently as ignorant of what was good and correct as myself and bestowed on me the most extravagant praises and dangerous flatteries, the attention I received from ye great, the noble and the fair, ... and the consciousness of possessing a musical ear such as everybody had not, made me think myself a most consequential being. I said the rudest things I could invent, being sure I should hear them repeated as good jokes; I was indulged in all my wishes as far as it was practicable; I was becoming a spoilt child and in danger of becoming what too many of my musical brethren have become under similar circumstances and unfortunately remained thro' life.' These years were certainly not without incident, such as the occasion in Ashby-de-la-Zouch when Crotch was directing from the harpsichord a performance of an overture by Abel, and flew into a rage because the two horns put down their instruments in order to hear *him* properly!

His prentice years in Cambridge (1786-8) and Oxford (1788-9) were followed by his appointment as Organist of Christ Church in 1789, at the tender age of fourteen (he obtained his B Mus five years later!) and as Professor in 1797—a post he held until his death in 1847. 1797 was also the year of his marriage to Martha Bliss, of whom Crotch wrote that he had 'admired her for nine, loved her for seven, and courted her for five years'. (He built himself an observatory on the roof of the house in Broad Street where they went to live, which must have been some consolation to him for his inability—perhaps also disinclination—to



William Crotch: a watercolour of Hurley in the Thames valley

accompany Mrs Crotch on her frenzied walks: 'four times round the Parks, three times round Christ Church Meadow, and up Cumnor Hill as a regular event'.

Crotch was evidently more conservative as a teacher than as a composer, as is apparent from Mr Rennert's detailed description of the oratorio *Palestine* (1804-12), which interrupts the narrative between Crotch's move to London in 1805 and his appointment as the first Principal of the RAM in 1822. He guided the infant institution with wisdom, foresight and tolerance—which made his resignation in 1832 because of a stupid misunderstanding all the more regrettable. His pupils at the Academy included young William Sterndale Bennett (Principal from 1866 to 1875), who remembered with affection how Crotch used to arrive at the old building in Tenterden Street having walked all the way from his house in Notting Hill, with his pockets stuffed with paint-boxes and sketch-books, the newest additions to which he displayed to his delighted students. He would also play Handel choruses to his class from memory, by way of giving them a special treat; and years later Bennett told Mendelssohn that Crotch was the only person in England who really knew anything about Handel.

The last four chapters deal sympathetically with the choral music (apart from *Palestine*); the organ music, including three concertos; with 'Crotch as a Musician' and 'Crotch as an Artist'. The text carries a number of music examples (in a legible if not particularly elegant hand); there is an extremely useful and detailed catalogue of Crotch's compositions; and there are twenty-four monochrome illustrations which include reproductions of several of his very attractive watercolours.

Arthur Wills

Richard Stoker: *Contemporary Organ Technique* (Ashdown, £1.20)

Richard Stoker's volume consists of twenty pieces, each one page in length. The composer envisages that the work could be performed without a break as a recital item and he has been at pains to ensure thematic coherence by his characteristic use of serial technique, with much use of cancrizans and inversion. The pieces are carefully graded, and unlike many *études* are of

considerable musical interest and appeal.

William Alwyn: *Naiades, for flute and harp* (Boosey & Hawkes, £1.75)

This piece has the virtue of clear, fluid, linear textures which appear to be well placed for both instruments. There is something of a gallic flavour in the harmony at the quieter moments although the piece is not without energy and a sense of purpose in its formal outlines. There are one or two 'hair-raising' passages for both flute and harp but the final *Allegro molto* is especially effective in its sense of culmination through the repetition of small rhythmical cells.

Philip Hattey: *Seven Poems of Robert Graves* (Boosey & Hawkes, 60p)

The strength of these settings lies, for the most part, in some nicely flexible vocal writing (in terms of stress; they are somewhat limited in vocal range). The harmonic idiom is rather conservative but handled with skill and with some cadence-points that are most affecting. On the whole an enjoyable—if not very profound—set of songs, with an accompaniment that is well within the scope of the amateur pianist.

Ronald Stevenson: *Fantasia on themes from Britten's 'Peter Grimes'* (Boosey & Hawkes, 75p)

This short piano fantasy was commissioned by BBC/TV and is dedicated to former RAM student Graham Johnson. Anyone already familiar with the complexities and technical demands of Stevenson's *Passacaglia on DSCH* (surely one of the finest examples of contemporary piano writing to emerge in recent years and shamefully neglected by most pianists, John Ogdon being the sole exception) will not be surprised that the piano writing, whilst always idiomatic, is nevertheless a challenge to any but the finest technician. The graphic portrayal of the key points of Britten's opera (the storm, the borough 'gossip' and, most effective of all, Grimes's mad soliloquy) are drawn together into one continuous movement. The final few moments of the piece are really very finely imagined, making use of the opera's first Interlude theme played pizzicato inside the piano, *on the strings*: to my mind an example of a thoroughly convincing and justifiable use of one of the frequently abused keyboard innovations of our time.

Phyllis Tate: *Apparitions* (OUP, £2.50); *A Victorian Garland* (OUP, £1.80)

Here are two substantial vocal/instrumental pieces from this well-known British composer. *Apparitions*, a 'ballad sequence' for tenor, harmonica, string quartet and piano are, to quote the composer, ... performed for the most part as if through a gauze, the dynamic only occasionally rising to *forte* and the string quartet playing largely *con sordini*. Each song centres around its basic tune and its inversion or retrograde inversion. ... The songs themselves are indeed evocative and often sinister and dramatic in their vocal concept. I did find it hard to imagine the extent to which the harmonica could be successfully integrated into the overall texture. (I understand that the piece was recorded by Argo in 1972—although I have been unable to trace a copy); the record would provide the answer.

The *Victorian Garland*, to poems by Matthew Arnold, is set for soprano and contralto solos with horn and piano. The score, published in the composers' MS (alas, far from satisfactory in terms of legibility) is busy in texture and chromatic in idiom. I must

confess I was unable to make very much more of it from a sounding standpoint as it is poorly reproduced. I do not think it is asking too much of both publishers and composers that, if they intend to produce a work in facsimile form (and incidentally charge £1.80 for it), a little more effort be made in the interests of clear reproduction.

Richard Stoker: *Piano Sonata No 1* (Peters)

This two-movement sonata shows Richard Stoker's proclivity for strong, well-contrasted textures and astringent harmonies. The first movement, *Ritmico*, is full of tense explosions and moments of uneasy silence. The second is a fluid and fluent *Riposo* which, title notwithstanding, reaches a climax of considerable power. Altogether it is a compact and effective piece of piano writing.

Richard Stoker: *Little Organ Book; Three Improvisations* (Boosey & Hawkes, 40p each)

Of these two sets of organ pieces, a *Little Organ Book* and *Three Improvisations*, to my mind the former is the more successful, employing the composer's considerable talent for the 'Miniature'. The six movements of the *Organ Book* each capture instantly an atmosphere and texture that have character and are consistent. The *Improvisations*, on the other hand, whilst idiomatic in terms of organ writing, seem to rely a little too much on the artifice of the sustained spread chord. Nevertheless, one must welcome two additions to the modern repertoire that do not make excessive demands on the performer.

Arthur Wills: *Trio Sonata for organ* (Boosey & Hawkes, £1)

It must be said that this is for the rather more advanced performer. However, the neatly sprung rhythms of the first movement and its elasticity of counterpoint are most pleasing. The second movement, a gentle *Siciliana*, is followed by a bright and mercifully unrhetorical finale.

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

The Frank Bridge Trust (administered by the Royal College of Music) is making an intensive effort to increase interest in Bridge's work, and has set in motion a programme of recordings, performances and publications. It would be extremely useful if any of your readers who knew Bridge—either socially, as professional colleague, or as one of his pupils—could be in touch with me. All reminiscences and photographs will be quickly copied and, where necessary, returned. Suitable material will be passed to Dr Trevor Bray, who is now preparing the first full-length book about Bridge and his music.

Yours faithfully,
John Bishop

Frank Bridge Trust,
c/o 14 Barby Road,
London W10 6AR

Notes about Members and Others

James Blades has been elected by the Percussive Arts Society of Indiana to their 'Hall of Fame' for 1975.

Malcolm Macdonald has been busy lately with three commissions: from the Newbury Symphony Orchestra for a *Saeta* for cor anglais and orchestra (in memory of the composer Robert Still); from the Bedfordshire Youth Concert Band for *Scipio*, based

on Handel's march; and from the Wakefield Youth Band for *Plutarch's Magpie*, a piece for narrator and brass band.

Penelope Cave won the National Harpsichord Competition 1975, held in Southport on 29 September and adjudicated by Thomas Wess.

Colwyn Sillman's Restoration Pro Musica Chorus and Orchestra gave concerts for University College, Cardiff at Monmouth School for Girls on 8 June and 22 November.

Alan Bush celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday on 22 December. A half-hour television programme was devoted to him by BBC 2 on 25 October; the RAM Club presented a programme of his music on 10 November (also celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of his professorship at the Academy); and a birthday concert was given at the Wigmore Hall on 11 January.

Georgina Zellan-Smith has made a Liszt record (the Sonata in B minor, two Paganini *Études*, two *Consolations*, the first *Liebestraum*, and the *Valse oubliée* in G) for Oryx's 'Basic Record Library' (BRL-C62), and gave a recital at New Zealand House on 15 January.

William Alwyn's *Six Nocturnes* were given their first broadcast performance on BBC's Radio 3 on 5 December, by Benjamin Luxon and David Willison.

Alice Ainslie (née Lumsden) writes: The Friends of Hereford Three Choirs Festival promoted a lunch-hour recital in the cathedral on 15 November by Raphael Wallfisch (cello) and Richard Markham (piano), which provided an hour of pure musical enjoyment besides helping to swell the funds for this year's Festival. They and Christian Blackshaw were among the 'Young Artists of Fame and Promise' who gave recitals at the Farnham Maltings in Surrey between November 1975 and February 1976.

Maria Moll was awarded the Premio Extraordinario Bolsa de Estudios at the Francisco Vinas Competition in Barcelona in November, for study at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. Her accompanist was Charles Spencer, who has been invited back to Barcelona to act as official accompanist for the 1976 competition.

Mrs Joyce Britton writes that the Trustees of the Frank Britton Award made their first triennial grant of £1000 in 1975 to King Liam (Betty) Woo, who came on scholarships from Hong Kong to England via a year's study in America, and is now enabled to have a fourth year at the RAM. She adds that 'in order to maintain its present level there is need for further support, and the Fund will remain open indefinitely. Bankers' orders are particularly welcome. Cheques should be made payable to the "Frank Britton Award" and sent to Myrus, Smith & Walker, Station Chambers, Woodcote Road, Wallington, Surrey.'

Dr Arthur Pritchard has been appointed Academic Tutor to the B Mus Course at the Academy.

Adrian Brown was one of the four finalists in the Herbert von Karajan Conducting Competition held in Berlin in September. There were sixty-four competitors, twelve of them British.

A Harry Isaacs prize fund is to be established for an annual prize piano playing. Cheques should be made payable to 'The RAM Club (Harry Isaacs Fund a/c)' and sent to the RAM Club.

Martino Tirimo gave a series of six recitals at the Purcell Room and the Queen Elizabeth Hall between 3 October and 6 November, at which he played all Schubert's piano sonatas.

Jacqueline Stoker has made an anthology of 'Speeches for the younger Actress' entitled *Make your Choice*; it is published by Samuel French Ltd.

Seven of Nicholas Maw's *Life Studies* were recorded by the BBC in November by the Academy of the BBC under Manoug Parikian.

The 1976 Summer Recitals (now in their thirteenth year) organised by Harold Clark in the Eastern Building of Peterborough Cathedral, of which the Patrons are Sir Thomas Armstrong and William Alwyn, will include appearances by Philip Mead, Trevor Ford, Marianne Barton, Timothy Barratt, and Mr Clark himself.

The Lindsay String Quartet (Peter Cropper, Ronald Birks, Roger Bigley and Bernard Gregor-Smith), with Thomas Iglo (cello), gave a concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 4 November.

The Cummings String Trio (Diana Cummings, Luciano Jorio and Rohan de Saram), with Sarah Francis (oboe), gave a concert in the Purcell Room on 2 November that included the first performance of Phyllis Tate's *The Rainbow and the Cuckoo*.

In the revival of Prokofiev's *War and Peace* by the English National Opera at the London Coliseum in October and November Felicity Lott was Natasha, Ann Hood was Hélène and Derek Hammond-Stroud was Napoleon.

A memorial concert—if that is the right way to describe such a convivial and friendly occasion—for Douglas Cameron, was held at the London Cello Club in Lancaster Gate on 30 September. Music for cello ensembles provided the basis of the programme, directed by Derek Simpson.

Wigmore Hall recitals have been given by Jonathan Williams, accompanied by Graham Johnson, on 4 October; by the Vega Wind Quintet and John Blakely on 9 October; Diana Stuart (née Smith), accompanied by Jennifer Russell, on 13 October; by Sybil Barlow on 10 November; by Elaine Watts, accompanied by Priscilla Stewart, on 18 November; and by Terence Judd (eighteen-year-old pianist son of Anthony and Gloria Judd) on 9 December.

Else Cross gave a broadcast recital in Zürich on 6 November, devoted to music by Gottfried von Einem, Kabalevsky and Sarti, and on 23 March will make a recording in Vienna for Austrian Radio which will include the Sonata and Five Inventions by Leopold Spinner, the Suite by Humphrey Searle, Howard Ferguson's Bagatelles, and Richard Rodney Bennett's Sonata.

David Morgan's *Sinfonia da Requiem* was given its first performance on 26 October by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Charles Groves at the Royal Festival Hall.

Directors and Members of the Committee of Management

Distinctions

Births

Appointment
October 1975
Her Grace the Duchess of Westminster

DBE
Janet Baker, CBE, Hon RAM

OBE
Jacqueline du Pré, Hon RAM

Pierce: to Anthony and Pauline Pierce (née Fry), a daughter, Francesca, 9 September 1975
Pratley: to Geoffrey and Wendy Pratley (née Eathorne), a daughter, Alice, 7 November 1975

Marriages

Adie-Langrish: Captain John Adie, RCT to Penelope Langrish, 2 August 1975
Morris-Murray: Gareth Morris to Patricia Murray, 19 December 1975

Deaths

George Baker, CBE, Hon RAM, FRCM (8 January 1976)
Leonard Brain, BSc (Lond), FRAM (10 November 1975)
Nora M Comley (8 October 1975)
Muriel Holland, ARAM (25 October 1975)
Cimbro Martin, ARAM, FGSM (24 October 1975)
Oliver Veller (1975)
[Dmitri Shostakovich died on 9 August 1975, not 11 August as stated in the last issue of the *Magazine*]

RAM Awards

GRSM Diploma, December 1975

Pass Hilary Barnett

LRAM Diploma, December 1975/January 1976

Piano (Teacher's) Ruth Alexandrowicz, Timothy Barratt, Sylvia Bowden, Deborah Dunne, Adrian Goss, Kevin Goss, Alison Handley, Moira Hayward, Richard Heyes, Angela Hobbs, Marie Meyler, Eleanor Ransom, Eirian Rees-Jones, Elizabeth Short, Christine Whiffen.

Piano Accompaniment Marie Meyler

Organ (Performer's) Patricia Nelson

Organ (Teacher's) Richard Eldridge

Singing (Teacher's) Cheryl Edwards

Violin (Teacher's) Lesley Gwyther, Diana Hourston, Diana Morris

Cello (Teacher's) Josephine Easthope, Julia Tagg

Double Bass (Teacher's) Albert Dennis, Sara Dobson, Clare Long, Jonathan Platt

Flute (Performer's) Nicholas Carter

Flute (Teacher's) Robin Fox

Oboe (Teacher's) Christina East, Joy Lavery, Gillian West

Clarinet (Performer's) Christopher Swann

Clarinet (Teacher's) Judith Ogden, Janet Waterhouse

Bassoon (Teacher's) Glyn Williams

Trumpet (Teacher's) Graham Sanders

Guitar (Performer's) Maria Chciuk-Celt

RAM Club News

Guy Jonson

The musical programme at the Social Evening of 10 November 1975 took the form of a tribute to Alan Bush in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of his professorship at the RAM; and it afforded the listener not only the privilege of hearing an entire programme of his music but the opportunity for realising his complete mastery of the medium in which he composed the various works we heard.

The programme opened with a piece for organ *For a Festal Occasion*, Op 56, skilfully played by Douglas Hopkins. Then followed the *Concert Piece*, Op 17 for cello and piano, in which Jonathan Williams was joined by the composer at the piano. A high degree of polish combined with a splendid warmth of string tone characterised this performance. Thomas Walsh then played the most recently composed work in the programme, the piano Sonata in A flat, Op 71, written in 1970. This quite monumental work of formidable difficulties was given what can only be described as a completely dedicated and authoritative reading in which the architectural proportions were projected with concise clarity. After a short interval, Kenneth Bowen brought to bear not only a keenly intellectual grasp of the texts taken from Isaiah,

Milton, Blake and Blackman which comprise *Voices of the Prophets*, Op 41, but revealed his own inimitable and kaleidoscope range of colour in the lovely vocal writing of this interesting work. Up to this point in a long programme, the listener quite rightly was called upon to exercise a high degree of concentration, so that the final item, *Three Concert Studies*, Op 41 for piano trio played by the Burnell Trio (Graeme Humphrey, Elizabeth Edwards and Lynden Cranham), was so well chosen in that the music was of a much more easily assimilated nature in the three highly contrasted pieces which were played with an easy assurance and sensitive ensemble rounding off a memorable programme of unique musical interest.

One formed the impression that each individual item could scarcely be given a finer performance, an impression reinforced by a chance remark by the composer in the relaxed atmosphere of the gathering for refreshments at the conclusion of the evening, following upon an enthusiastic and appreciative vote of thanks by the newly installed President of the Club, Dr William Cole, which was heartily endorsed by all those fortunate enough to be present.

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Wareing, Deryck, *Ellesmere College, Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 9AB*
Weber, Sven, *Lang-Well, Ophir, Orkney*
White, John, *36 Seelys, Harlow, Essex CM17 0AD*

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Spencer, Charles, *83 Addison Road, London W14*

Associate Member

Thiman, Mrs Madeline, *7 Edmunds Walk N2*

RAM Concerts

Autumn Term

Symphony Orchestra

11 December
Berlioz Overture 'Benvenuto Cellini', Op 23
Mozart Piano Concerto in C, K 503
Shostakovich Symphony No 5, Op 47
Conductor Maurice Handford
Soloist King-Lam Woo (piano)
Leader Louise Williams

Chamber Orchestra

9 December
Respighi Suite 'Gli Uccelli'
Bach Cantata No 202 ('Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten')
Roussel Petite Suite, Op 39
Haydn Symphony No 100 in G ('Military')
Conductor Norman Del Mar
Soloists Sara Mousley (soprano), Nigel Roberts (oboe), Carol Norman (violin), Corinne Frost (cello), Clare Redfarn (harpsichord)
Leader Carol Norman

Choral Concert

27 November
Verdi Messa da Requiem
Conductor Meredith Davies
Soloists Judith Dennison (soprano), Nicola Lanzetter (mezzo-soprano), Gareth Roberts (tenor), Nicholas Folwell (bass)
Leader Louise Williams

Repertoire Orchestra

5 December

Weber Overture 'Euryanthe'

Elgar Serenade in E minor, Op 20
Sterndale Bennett Piano Concerto No 4 in F minor, Op 19
Grétry/Mottl Ballet Suite 'Céphale et Procris'
Sibelius Symphony No 2 in D, Op 43 (IV)
Conductors Maurice Miles, and Members of the Advanced Conductors' Class: Philip Hughes, Michael Schønwandt, Tony Moore, Hywel Davies
Soloist David Owen Norris (piano)
Leader Stephen Rouse

Training Orchestra

10 December
Mozart Overture 'Le nozze di Figaro', K 492
Brahms Symphony No 2 in D, Op 73 (III)
Haydn Symphony No 95 in C minor (I)
Haydn Horn Concerto No 2 in D
Schubert Symphony No 5 in B flat, D 485 (II)
Beethoven Symphony No 2 in D, Op 36 (IV)
Conductors Maurice Miles, and Members of the First-year Conductors' Class: David Lawrence, Nicholas Patrick, Glyn Foley, Peter Morris
Soloist Margaret Gundara (horn)
Leader Paul Parkinson

The Music of Edgard Varèse (1883-1965)

First Concert
24 November
Chamber Orchestra
Varèse Offrandes (1921)
Milhaud L'Homme et son Désir (1917)
Varèse Déserts (1954)
Debussy/Boulez Chansons de Bilitis
Varèse/Chou Wen-Chung Nocturnal (1961-5)
Conductor John Carewe
Soloists Sara Mousley, Lynne Hirst (sopranos), Hilary Fisher (mezzo soprano), Peter Crowe (tenor), Antony Shelley (bass), Cheryl Hawkins (reciter)
Sound Projection Paul Patterson
Chorus Master Michael Procter
Leader Carol Norman

Second Concert

3 December
Manson Ensemble
Varèse Hyperprism (1923)
Varèse Octandre (1923)
Varèse Ionisation (1931)
Varèse Density 21·5 (1936)
Varèse Intégrales (1925)
Conductor John Carewe
Soloist Ingrid Culliford (flute)

In addition to regular Tuesday and Wednesday lunch-time concerts, an Exchange Concert was given by students from the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, on 25 September, and evening recitals were given by James Walker (viola) on 14 October, and Catherine Wilmers (cello) on 21 October.

Beethoven 'Fidelio'

A Concert Performance of Beethoven's opera was given in the Duke's Hall on 7 November, as part of the 'Composer of the Term' scheme. The Symphony Orchestra and Choir were conducted by Maurice Handford, and a narration was written and spoken by Peter Crowe. The cast was as follows:

<i>Don Fernando</i>	John Riley
<i>Don Pizarro</i>	Nicholas Folwell
<i>Florestan</i>	David Johnston (by special arrangement)
<i>Leonore</i>	Linda Rands
<i>Rocco</i>	Antony Shelley
<i>Marzelline</i>	Beryl Korman
<i>Jaquino</i>	Derek Barnes
<i>First prisoner</i>	Nicholas Johnson
<i>Second prisoner</i>	John Barker

An 'Opera Workshop' was staged in the Duke's Hall on 2 and 3 December; Director of Opera John Streets, Conductors Michael Schønwandt and Hywel Davies, Producer Anna Sweeny, with Mary Nash and Stuart Hutchinson at two pianos. Items included: **Verdi** 'Un Ballo in Maschera'

Nicola Lanzetter, Derek Barnes, Antony Shelley, Kevin Hughes/Moore Parker, Linda Rands

Verdi 'Falstaff'

Beryl Korman, Glynis Marwood/Teresa Kennedy, Jane Harman, Clare Moll, Richard Suart, Nicholas Johnson/Peter Crowe, Derek Barnes, Philip Watkins, Mark Wildman

Mozart 'Le nozze di Figaro'

Judith Dennison/Jillian Mascall, Christine Taylor/Elaine Williams, Rosalind Eaton/Kristine Anderson, Richard Suart/Nicholas Folwell

Mascagni 'Cavalleria Rusticana'

Anne Mason, Claire Powell, Nicholas Folwell

Review Week

Review Week in the Autumn Term (1-5 December) included concerts by the Repertoire Orchestra (Maurice Miles), two by the Manson Ensemble (John Carewe), an Early Music Workshop Concert (Peter Holman), a concert of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos (Gareth Morris), a concert by the Rumanian chamber group Ars Nova of Cluj (Cornel Taranu), and two evenings of Opera Workshop. There were lectures on 'Stained Glass' (Dr William Cole), 'Beethoven's violin Concerto' (Dr Robert Simpson), 'Beethoven's piano sonatas' (Professor Denis Matthews), 'Entering the Profession' (Richard Markham), 'Beethoven's Songs' (Leslie Orrey), and 'Stage Movement Improvisation' (John Kentish). There was a talk by Elizabeth Browning, Chairman of the Association of Speech-impaired Children, Films on Bird Migration, introduced by Tom Slack, and, last but by no means least, the RAM Students' Union's highly successful and convivial Christmas Ball.

The Students' Union

Editorial 'Music, a luxury item?'

Oliver Kentish

The Royal Academy, oldest of London's four major music colleges, has in the region of seven hundred students, all dedicated to one of the most physically and mentally taxing of the arts. But how many out of that seven hundred will be able to fulfil their aspirations as musicians?

Standards of performance are higher than ever before, and continue to rise. Numbers of audiences in our concert halls may be dwindling, but they are much more critical in their approach to music. As students, and hopefully the performers of tomorrow, it is up to us, and our professors to recognise this problem, and tackle it in a positive way. Is live music slowly dying? All the facts point to that.

Music has now become, through the media of broadcasting by radio, television, and gramophone records, immediately accessible in practically every house in this country, so who would necessarily wish to go out to live concerts? Apart from this, there is the price of concert tickets, which now carry 8% VAT. Orchestras these days are more concerned with filling a hall in order to perhaps break even, than with promoting exciting, lesser-known new works. Music is now business, and business means money (or lack of it), and money means economy and economy means exclusion of most things save popularity.

The art of music and its performance must not be allowed to be priced out of the reach of everyone except the rich, which is what is going to happen. How are the young performers and composers of today going to get a hearing? It costs a frightening amount to hire a hall, and pay for the publicity needed to promote a concert. We are lucky in one respect, in that the BBC does provide opportunities for young composers and performers to get a public hearing, but even that does not go nearly far enough.

It seems that, these days, a music student has firstly to be rich, in order to afford a decent instrument to play on, and that talent and tenacity are not enough on their own. All these things combine to make music, live music—a dying thing.

What are we, the professionals of tomorrow, going to do about this? By being at the Academy each one of us has made a positive decision to become a musician, compared with some students at universities, whose studies sometimes have no bearing on their future careers, therefore we must protect our interests, and it is our responsibility to promote ourselves and ensure our survival. A way must be found to 'Keep Music Live', and accessible. What are YOU going to do to survive?

Modern music at RAM in 1975

Robert Dando

Regrettably, performances of modern music at the RAM are still very much of a specialised affair. It seems that too many musicians still define 'music' as only European music from 1700 to 1900; nothing from anywhere else and nothing outside these dates. The only exception to this rule would appear to be the kind of post-1900 European and American music that generally follows the European tradition anyway; music by such composers as Britten, Shostakovich, Copland, *et al.* For the purposes of this article I am not concerned with composers such as these, but with composers like Schönberg, Berg, Webern, Ives, Varèse, Messiaen, Penderecki, Ligeti and Boulez.

In addition to the specialised aspect of modern music performances at the Academy I have to add that apparently they used to be extremely infrequent. During 1975 they have become more plentiful, thanks mainly to the efforts of Paul Patterson and

John Carewe, but there is still room for a good deal more. Anyway, here is a recapitulation of the RAM's modern music events of 1975.

The first of these concerts, in January, was almost certainly the most significant: a concert of works by the Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki. Penderecki himself was present and the evening began when the Principal awarded him Honorary Membership of the RAM. There followed the music, which began with the *Three Miniatures* for violin and piano, played by Irvine Arditti and Ian Anderson. Then Penderecki himself conducted the first London performance of his *Polymorphia* for 48 strings. Then the Arditti Quartet played Penderecki's second string Quartet. After this, Paul Patterson conducted the first European performance of the *Pittsburgh Overture* for wind band. Finally Penderecki took up the baton once more to conduct the first UK performance of his recent orchestral work *The Dream of Jacob*. This piece was encored and the whole concert (with the exception of the *Three Miniatures*) was broadcast on Radio 3 in August.

Also in January there was a concert of student compositions. The works were by Elise Lorraine, Odaline Martinez, Nigel Crouch, Ho Wai On, Robert Dando and Ian Hay.

On 29 January the Manson Ensemble gave a lunch-time concert of works by Paul Patterson. The concert began with two organ works, *Fluorescence* and *Intrada*, played by Colin Andrews and Susan Heath, respectively. Then followed the *Comedy for wind quintet*; *Intersections* for ensemble and finally *Rebecca*, which is an extremely humorous setting for reciter and ensemble, of Hilaire Belloc's poem. The reciter was Peter Lea-Cox, and the conductor, in this work and in *Intersections*, was John Carewe.

John Carewe also conducted the Manson Ensemble, in February, in a performance of Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and Walton's *Façade*. The soprano was Susan Barber and the speaker Peter Crowe.

Turning to the Summer Term, on 24 June Norman Del Mar included Webern's *Orchestral Variations* in his concert with the Chamber Orchestra.

On 26 June there was a lunch-time concert of music by Charles Ives, comprising the *Three-page Sonata* for piano, the *Largo* for violin, clarinet and piano; a few songs and *Psalm 67* for chorus. The performers were Robert Dando, Vivienne Palmer, Judith Anderson, Susan Willett, Richard Heyes and The Consort, conducted by Michael Procter. On the same day there was an evening choral concert conducted by Meredith Davies; the programme included the first London performance of Anthony Milner's *The Water and the Fire*. The composer was present.

Also in the Summer Term, there was a concert which included Stravinsky's *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas*, sung by Peter Crowe and conducted by Paul Patterson, and a lunch-time concert devoted to Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* and Schönberg's second string Quartet.

On 22 October there was a modern music concert. The music included Ives's *The Unanswered Question*. This performance (trumpet soloist Kevin Bradley and conductors Robert Dando and Clive Watkiss) shows, I hope, the possibilities of performances of spatial music at the RAM.

On 24 November and 3 December John Carewe conducted the first two of a series of four concerts devoted to the complete works of Edgard Varèse, but as these concerts are going to be discussed in the summer issue of the *Magazine*, I shall only

mention them here.

On 2 December there was a concert which included works by Webern, Penderecki, Odaline Martinez and Stravinsky.

Finally, on 5 December a Rumanian music ensemble, known as the Ars Nova of Cluj, gave a concert. Their programme included Ligeti's harpsichord piece, *Continuum*; and *Oda* by Cornel Taranu, who is the director of the group.

Between the time of writing and publication several events in 1976 should have taken place. Indeed, the first of these events is already in the past: Krzysztof Penderecki has returned to the RAM to make a documentary for BBC 2. He will be seen conducting the strings of the Symphony Orchestra in *Polymorphia*. On 21 January a concert of student compositions will have taken place; and on 26 January and 4 February John Carewe will have completed his series of Varèse concerts.

For those still put off by modern music, the best remedy is to repeatedly attend such concerts; sooner or later you'll find that modern music doesn't bite after all!

A choriambic contretemps

Philip Lee

Have you ever wondered, in a concert hall or music college, whatever happens to all the wrong notes? Of course that would be a silly question if you didn't know what happened to the right notes. So I shall tell you both answers and keep everyone happy.

As you are no doubt fully aware, right notes go to make up that great pattern of sound which is achieved when everything is in its right place, at the right pitch and of the right dynamic. Then it is that the symphony, or sonata, or song, rises like an invisible picture, entices the listener, and vanishes into those distant realms whence it can never be reclaimed. But what of the semiquaver too many, or that forgotten minim, or that crotchet which arrived only to find that another had already taken its place?

In the hall of the Royal Academy of Music many such notes have found themselves a little lost and bewildered, settling on the boards between the chairs and stands, wondering why they didn't quite make it. Some slip down between the cracks of the floorboards and disappear into the nether regions below. Others wait, feigning death, hoping that they will not be crushed by the tramp of heavy feet, or stabbed by the vicious spike of a cello, or impaled by the errant baton of an erstwhile conductor.

It is very difficult to find a fallen crotchet, or quaver. Minims are, of course, bigger, but they are more transparent and hide that much more easily. But the most insurmountable difficulty is that every single one of them is shy. You may not believe that a *fortissimo* minim from a trombone could be anything but blustering and pompous, but the fact remains that it is as shy as a *pianissimo* quaver from a flute.

When all is dark and the last pitter-clatter of scholarly feet has died away; when the bust of Sir Henry Wood has ceased groaning and complaining; when the silver moon's tarnished beams have silently plumbed the depths of the hall; then it is that the stage comes to life. From all the concealed nooks and eaves tiptoe discarded notes. Those who are newly fallen that day are collected together and their names are taken: *Eroica* quaver 142; *Freischütz* crotchet 29; and a very grand *Tannhäuser* semibreve. The 'moderns' are listed separately. There are a great many Stravinsky semiquavers, and one rare character, a Patterson behind-the-bridge crotchet. This naturally leads to a form of snobbery where the classical Beethoven quaver will not speak to the *Tannhäuser*

semibreve and will not even look at the Patterson crotchet. All is now bustle and gossip, with the one exception mentioned above, until the arrival of the leader. Once, when a distinguished conductor was rehearsing in the hall, a Palestrina breve escaped and hid under the pedals of a nearby pianoforte. Eventually it was discovered by other survivors already living on the stage and was elected leader after the various demises of the other senior members. (This may sound strange, but notes have a life-span as do humans, and through wear and tear and other accidents they eventually succumb and pass on to the great manuscript in the sky.) The Palestrina breve taps on the stage with the broken tail of a rest and calls for quiet. He welcomes the new members and briefly explains where they will hide and their new duties.

Suddenly there is a cry and a minim armed with a sharpened ledger line runs up to the breve. Some mice have been seen approaching from the south west of the hall. Quickly the breve orders the newcomers away and calls for reinforcements. Soon a regiment of a hundred crotchetts is drawn up in front of him. All are armed and look mean. They prepare an ambush on the south west steps. The mice, who are out foraging, belong to a nearby basement and do not know that the hall is occupied. Thus the notes have the advantage and prepare to hurl ledger lines and sharp key signatures. The mice draw nearer and begin to climb the steps. Soon the sounds of heavy fighting fill the hall. More reinforcements in the shape of fifty quavers arrive and the mice go into full retreat their tails badly damaged and their whiskers wickedly torn. Victory is assured for the notes who cheer loudly.

Just then the door opens and a light is switched on. There is a sudden silence. The night guard casts a sleepy, benign look across the stage and goes out again. The light goes off and the notes creep quietly away to their hiding places. Sir Henry grunts in his sleep, the moon disappears around a corner, and all is black and silent.

The RAM Magazine

The *RAM Magazine* is published three times a year (in March, July and December) and is sent free to all members on the roll of the RAM Club and of the Students' Union. Copies may also be bought by non-members, price 50p per issue. Members are invited to send to the Editor news of their activities that may be of interest to readers, and the Editor is always glad to hear from members (and others) who would like to contribute longer articles, either on musical or on other topics. **Copy for the Spring issue should arrive no later than 1 January, for the Summer issue 1 April, and for the Autumn issue 1 September and, wherever possible, should be typed (double-spaced, one side of the page only), please.** All correspondence should be addressed to: The Editor, RAM Magazine, Royal Academy of Music, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HT.

